

Steens Mountain Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes

October 21 and 22, 2002

Members Present:

Jason Miner, Fish and Recreational Fishing, Portland, Oregon
E. Ron Harding, Wild Horse Management, Burns, Oregon
Tom Harris, Chair, Mechanized or Consumptive Recreation, Keno, Oregon
Mike Golden, Dispersed Recreation, Redmond, Oregon
Hoyt Wilson, Grazing Permittee, Princeton, Oregon
Harland Yriarte, Private Landowner, Eugene, Oregon
Richard Benner, No Financial Interest, Portland, Oregon
Alice Elshoff, Environmental Representative - Local, Frenchglen, Oregon
Stacy Davies, Grazing Permittee, Frenchglen, Oregon
Jerry Sutherland, Vice Chair, Environmental Representative – Statewide,
Portland, Oregon
Cynthia Witzel, Recreation Permit Holder, Frenchglen, Oregon

Members Absent:

Wanda Johnson, Burns Paiute Tribe, Burns, Oregon
Steve Purchase, State Liaison, Salem, Oregon

Designated Federal Official (DFO):

Tom Dyer, Burns District Manager, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Hines,
Oregon.

Designated Federal Official Assistants:

Rhonda Karges, Management Support Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Liz Appelman, Budget Analyst, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Tara Wilson, Public Affairs Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Patti Wilson, Personnelist, BLM, Hines, Oregon

Presenters:

Mark Sherbourne, Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Jon Collins, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon
George Orr, District Ranger, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Evelyn Treiman, Outdoor Recreation Planner, BLM, Hines, Oregon
Tara Wilson, Public Affairs Specialist, BLM, Hines, Oregon

Facilitator:

Dale White

Commenting Public:

Tara Gunter, Oregon Natural Desert Association (ONDA)
Bill Marlett, ONDA
Susan Hammond, Hammond Ranches, Inc.
Steve Grasty, Harney County Judge
Robb Corbett, Burns City Manager
Irene Vlach, Sierra Club
Borden Beck, Volunteer with Sierra Club
Steven Moe, Lewis and Clark Law School
Peter Green, Governor's Office
Jason Miner, Liaison to Steens Alvord Coalition
Barrett Dash, Special Recreation Permit Holder
Ken Snider, self
Dave Tracey, Juniper Group Sierra Club
Dennis Oliphant, OR Guides and Packers

Others Present:

Carolyn Freeborn, BLM	Darren Brumback, BLM
Ron Wiley, BLM	Ed Davis, Rancher
Barb Cannady	Jean Aldatire
Cliff Volpe, Steens Mountain Running Camp	Brent Fenty, ONDA
Dave Harmon, BLM	Larry Fredricks
Margaret Wolf, BLM	John Spiegel, OSSA
Myrna Clarke, OSSA	Craig Miller, ONDA
C.M. Otley, Diamond Valley Ranch	

Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping, Agenda Review:

Dale White called the meeting to order with introductions, housekeeping, and agenda review.

Chairman Update:

Tom Harris welcomed new members. He reported receipt of a number of letters criticizing the SMAC for moving slow and for the failure of appointments to be accomplished timely. The appointment issue is scheduled to be discussed at a National Resource Advisory Council (RAC) meeting.

Tom asked the SMAC to consider how they want the Southeast Oregon RAC to be involved with the CMPA. There are two members of the RAC on this Council which could be one means of communication. The group will develop a response to the RAC during the agenda tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Action Followup: How does the SMAC want the Southeast Oregon RAC to be involved with the CMPA?

Charter Review:

The Council discussed the issues with getting new appointees confirmed. One means of covering the gap would be to make the SMAC's year the same as the RAC's (October 1 to September 30), and the old appointee serves until their successor is appointed. All motions are based on the current Charter document.

Motion made and seconded to request the Secretary change the Charter to state SMAC members serve until September 30 of each year or the date at which new members are appointed whichever is later. (Jerry moved, Hoyt seconded)

Discussion: None

Consensus Decision: Request the Secretary change the Charter to state SMAC members serve until September 30 of each year or the date at which new members are appointed whichever is later.

Motion made and seconded to take all the duties listed in the Act and include them in the Charter under Item 7. (Stacy moved, Jerry seconded).

Discussion: Stacy pointed out the Charter gives SMAC the responsibility to advise on the RMP but not to write it. Jerry raised the concern that he felt the SMAC had not been talking much about seamless, landscape management to this point, which is specified as part of the duties of the Council.

Consensus Decision: All the duties listed in the Act will be included in the Charter under Item 7.

Motion made and seconded to address subcommittees under Item 10, and move the discussion of the science committee to Item 11, and the succeeding headings will move down in number. (Alice moved, Stacy seconded)

Members discussed Item 10 which seems to confuse different types of committees.

Discussion: Members felt the definitions should be separated because the committees are totally different types of entities.

Consensus Decision: Address subcommittees under Item 10, and move the discussion of the science committee under Item 11, and the succeeding headings will move down in number. (Alice moved, Stacy seconded)

Motion made and seconded to strike everything to the semicolon in the sentence that begins "At least nine members must be present to constitute a quorum" in 12e

on page 5. The sentence would then start with “To make a formal recommendation...” (Jerry moved, Dick seconded)

Discussion: Members voiced their opinions on what would be considered a quorum, when it would be necessary, and when only five votes would carry a motion. They also discussed where and how a quorum should be designated within the Charter.

Objection to motion heard:

Roll Call vote: Tom Harris – Yes; Harland – No; Stacy – No; Alice – Yes;
Mike – Yes; Cindy Witzel – No; Jerry – Yes; Dick – Yes; Hoyt – No;
Jason – Yes; Ron – No;

Motion failed for lack of nine affirmative votes needed for a recommendation.

Motion made and seconded to remove Federal Register in last sentence. That sentence would then read: “A notice will be distributed to the local news media as early as possible” (Dick moved, Jason seconded)

Discussion: Members discussed whether or not a meeting should even be held without nine members present, the ramifications of not holding a meeting, what would have to be done concerning a Federal Register notice if a meeting is canceled, and what could be accomplished at a meeting with less than nine members.

Consensus Decision: Remove Federal Register in last sentence. That sentence would then read: “A notice will be distributed to the local news media as early as possible.”

Motion made and seconded to make Item 10 ‘Council Subcommittees’ and read, “To facilitate the function of the council, the council may establish subcommittees for the purpose of gathering information on the business of the Council.” (Dick moved, Jerry seconded).

Discussion: Members discussed formal and informal types of subcommittees, how to remain within the legal requirements, and what those committees could or could not do. It was noted to this point all the subcommittees had been informal, informational gathering type entities.

Dick provided possible wording for Item 10: “Council Subcommittees: To facilitate the functioning of the Council, the Council may recommend the functioning of the subcommittees.”

Hoyt objected to the motion.

Roll Call Vote: Tom H – Yes; Harland – Yes; Stacy – No; Alice – Yes; Mike – Yes; Cindy – No; Jerry – Yes; Dick – Yes; Hoyt – No; Jason – Yes; Ron – No

Motion failed due to lack of required nine affirmative votes.

Motion made and seconded for SMAC to recommend to the DFO the update to the Charter include the recommended amendments made to this point. (Dick moved, Stacy seconded).

Discussion: None

Consensus Decision: SMAC recommend to the DFO the updates to the Charter include the recommended amendments made to this point.

Transportation Classification and Maintenance Procedures:

Tom Harris reported although the subgroup had not really convened, a lot of information gathering had taken place, which included the often raised issue of intrusion of public use onto private lands due to the road closures and changes in the laws for Steens. Tom felt the more road closures occurring on the mountain, the less people will be able to use public land which in turn would probably increase the intrusion onto private land.

Mark Sherbourne talked with the Council on how the legislation calls for a transportation plan and what type of approach can be taken to complete it in conjunction with the RMP as well as within the timeframes required. Members discussed the various types of roads, uses, possible means of identification of types of routes and camping areas, and the best way to get the information on maps.

The Council agreed for Jerry to ask Brent Fenty, ONDA, about the inventory his organization performed this summer. Brent stated the information has been given to BLM and is also available to anyone who wishes it, as well as being on their web site.

Stacy proposed working on this at the December meeting by getting around maps and hammering it out to see what develops.

Tom Dyer reminded the Council of the 2004 legislated deadline for completing the RMP of which the Transportation Plan is a part. He expressed concern that if this group feels the RMP deadline cannot be met because they need more time, this needs to be identified now.

The Council agreed to return to this discussion this afternoon, after members of the subgroup had an opportunity to talk and schedule a meeting.

Landowner Access EA Update:

Mark Sherbourne, BLM, brought the landowner access letter back to the SMAC for their input on the part of the letter that discusses access and number of trips.

Cindy felt once a limit is placed on a private property right, that right has been taken away. Secondly she has a real concern of how the Act is being implemented and interpreted.

The Council agreed to continue this discussion after the Public Comment period.

Public Comments:

Steve Grasty, Harney County Judge, commended members for their time. Steve stated he has become more aware of the deals made outside this group where leverage is trying to be used to obtain whomever's desired results on subjects from water rights to snowmobiles. The other topic is the importance Steens plays in the tourism economics of Burns as well as entire Harney County. He talked of Avel Diaz who spent his youth on the Mountain, but now due to closures and restrictions and his physical abilities, he cannot take his grandchildren up there and show them where he spent his youth. Access needs for these people, as well as the numerous hunters that once used the Steens, must be considered.

Irene Vlach – Chair of the High Desert Committee of Oregon Chapter of Sierra Club stated she represents 21,000 Oregonians. She thanked the Council for having the meeting in Bend. Because she believes the Steens belongs to all, she urged the Council to hold a fair share of future meetings even further west of Burns and at least one in the Willamette Valley thereby giving all Oregonians a fair opportunity to comment. Although she is neither a landowner nor a local resident, she too has a stake in the Steens and is concerned the SMAC has only heard the local people's point of view. The group she represents has a different perspective. For two years now (since the legislation was signed) inholders and ranchers have had motorized access to wilderness that should have been closed at designation. She raised the question as to why Steens Wilderness is being treated different than all other designated wilderness, and a concern about the possible precedent setting aspect of the letter that had been discussed.

Ken Snider, Portland Oregon and a native Oregonian, has been visiting the Mountain and believes it to be a wonderful and diverse place. He expressed appreciation for seeing the SMAC at work and, although he recognizes the hardship in travel either direction, he urged holding one or two meetings in the Willamette Valley so others would also have an opportunity to see the process first hand. All wilderness is the same and needs to be managed according to law and whatever prescriptions are in the Act. He noted that places such as Sisters have been wilderness for years so snowmobilers know not to access it. It is a different situation on the newly designated Steens so people haven't yet understood the ramifications. Snowmobiles are limited to the Loop Road and private property and whatever SMAC recommends for management. He stressed

that because of noise, air, and water pollution, this is not an entirely clean recreation. He stated that Steens Mountain Packers also operate snowmobile excursions on open roads and trails with miles and miles of opportunity for fun, and he wondered if they are violating the Wilderness Act.

Borden Beck, a volunteer with Sierra Club who first went to visit the Steens in High School and worked on Roaring Springs Ranch in the early 1970's, has been going back ever since. He appreciated the meeting in Bend and felt it is important to afford everyone an easier opportunity to attend the meetings in order to develop more awareness of what the process is and the deliberations that go along with it. He felt the SMAC should recognize landscape management of Steens is important to all Oregonians. He discussed his understanding of the Act, how it was to be implemented, and the long-term goals. He believes the SMAC and BLM's charge is to manage and uphold laws and regulations of the Wilderness Act. The Steens Wilderness is no different than any other designated Wilderness. When trying to recognize historical use, it must be acknowledge these uses need to be compatible with ecological integrity of the Mountain and adapted to comply with wilderness regulations and not to supercede those things.

Susan Hammond, Diamond Ranches, Incorporated, from Harney County, and a landowner on the Steens, stated she's been to every meeting and is very interested in the Council and would really appreciate the cooperative part of this program being in Harney County. She stated people in Harney County don't go to other places to tell them how to manage their land, and doesn't think we ought to take the land management away from the land and people in Harney County. She thinks the wilderness on Steens is different because it is one of a kind due to the cow free aspect. The cow free aspect was brought on before the Act was even conceived. There are things that were talked about and agreed upon different in the Steens Wilderness area - the cow free on one side and the cooperative on other side. She felt the SMAC is talking about private property and private property rights because access is a private property right. She doesn't see the proposed letter as a cooperative document and thinks it can be done in a different, better format. If someone doesn't want private property to have access, then there needs to be talk about acquisition or something beneficial for the person that owns that land.

Steven Moe, a student at Lewis and Clark College, stated he is writing a paper on the law established for Steens. As part of the research, he would like to talk to as many people here as possible between now and next semester when the paper will be written.

Jason Miner, as liaison to Steens Alvord Coalition, reported the Coalition is beginning an assessment of aspen stands in the Steens area to determine the distribution and age class to create a baseline ecological assessment which will be useful when constructing a wildlife plan.

Rob Corbett, City Manager for Burns, commented everyone is becoming increasingly aware of the economic impact on the Steens because those that visit, put money into the community. He believes the community's voice should be heard in this Council and how the Steens relates economically to it. There has been much talk about maintaining the ecological balance of the Mountain, but the economics must also be considered. He expressed concern that if this Council adopts more limits on the Mountain, it will be harmful both to the Mountain and to the people who visit there; it would be helping those who would eliminate public use. He stated that if something is found to be harmful, it can be addressed. If any limits are put in place now, they cannot be lifted.

Peter Green, representing Governor Kitzhaber, thanked the members for their service. He stated the Governor has been involved since early 1999 when the idea came forward of doing a national monument and is very committed to making this CMPA and SMAC work. The single goal was to protect Steens Mountain, ecologically, socially, etc., which is what the Governor really feels brought them all together. Peter cautioned the Steens is different than other areas, with a goal to protect the ecological integrity, but not to lose sight of the fact it is a cooperative management area. He urged the Council to take the cooperative management area perspective very, very seriously. This Council is the means to work out these issues and with the new additions to the group, recommendations should be forthcoming. He reiterated that those on the Council don't go back to their parent organization for confirmation, nor to newspapers, and not to Congressmen. The people at this table are the ones who are to work this out. Peter stated it was a tough road, but trust had been placed in this high caliber group to be able to come together on the issues.

Peter also stated the Governor's top priority is to prevent inappropriate development on the Mountain, even as the economy changes and more pressure is applied. Another top priority is to protect the ranching lifestyle. Peter introduced the new members and gave a brief background on each.

Barrett Dash, a Special Recreation Permit holder, thanked the Council members for all their hard work. He asked the group to remember this is a cooperative management effort and we are all here for the same purpose which is to benefit the area. He urged the Council to make sure all voices are heard. He has been conducting pack trips into Three Sisters, Mount Jefferson and Steens upwards of 20 years and has been running them as wilderness trips prior to the establishment of wilderness. Until recently there wasn't a lot of focus on recreation; however, now he feels recreation permit holders are under fire and should not be penalized for treating the area as wilderness before it became one. He emphasized the importance of remembering the historical use interpretation. He reminded the Council historical use means permitted use, not illegal use that has been going on for years and years. He felt there needed to be a good hard look to balance out economics and ecology as well as remembering it is a cooperative management area that will be setting standards for other agencies to follow.

Landowner Access EA Update (Continued):

Motion made to send out letter as it stands; however, receiving no second the motion died. (Jerry moved)

Discussion: Members discussed concern about how the letter would be received, and Harland suggested perhaps telephone calls might be a better approach.

Council members discussed the possible levels of access, types of needed access, type and frequency of previous access, and location of access along with the existing laws and regulations and how the long-term management in the RMP would be addressed. Members also discussed the concern if the letter goes out containing the request for numbers, it would generate meaningless responses due to interpretation as well as protection for rights.

Tom Dyer asked the Council to come up with a means of determining reasonable use without using numbers of trips, something that can be analyzed in an EA.

Cindy stated the way she reads the Steens Act is that whatever the decision is on reasonable access, it will apply to the CMPA. Section 112 says reasonable access is the same for Wilderness and Steens Act. What causes it to be differentiated is whether or not the road goes through wilderness. Once you have a definition of reasonable use, it doesn't differentiate in types of inholder properties.

Hoyt stated the issue is once you let any government agency dictate when you can go to your private property, you lose your private property right to access.

Jerry reviewed the discussions held at prior meetings concerning access, what the document would be called, and possible time periods for the agreement.

Motion made and seconded to drop two sentences from the first paragraph on the second page. The first one starting with, "Please provide us with" and the second one "For purposes of." In place of these two, insert "Please tell us the purpose or type of use for which you need access to your property." (Dick moved, Mike seconded).

Discussion: Members talked about whether or not the letter, if modified as the motion indicates, would provide enough information to progress to the next step and also spoke of the possibility of contacting the inholders by telephone.

Hoyt objected to the motion.

Roll call vote: Tom – Yes; Harland – No; Stacy – Yes; Alice – Yes; Mike – Yes; Cindy – No; Jerry – Yes; Richard – Yes; Hoyt – No; Jason – Yes; Ron – Yes.

Motion failed due to lack of nine affirmative votes needed for recommendation.

Motion made and seconded to take no position on this. (Hoyt moved, Dick seconded).

Discussion: Members discussed whether or not the reference to SMAC could be left in based on earlier discussions. Concerns were expressed about the SMAC not taking a stance on the letter; about the possibility of the courts determining access; and of BLM being required to go forward even without the SMAC's recommendation.

Motion withdrawn by Hoyt with Dick's agreement.

Motion made and seconded to recommend to the DFO to send the letter as written with exception of the two sentences on top of the second page and with no advice on those two. (Dick moved and Tom Harris seconded).

Discussion: Members talked of who this would affect as well as the letters will be registered and the possible listing of the different options (i.e., 2920, cooperative management agreement, or court). Hoyt objected to two things about the letter, the first being counting trips and the other is that the letter doesn't make it clear there is another alternative, which is to go to court. Wording of the letter also raised some concerns to ensure that it was not threatening.

Motion withdrawn by Dick with Tom Harris's agreement.

Motion made and seconded to recommend to the DFO the letter be sent as written without the two sentences in the first paragraph at the top of the second page. Those sentences being "Please provide us with type of access (motorized and/or mechanized) needed as well as the approximate number of trips and during what season of the year the access is needed" and "For purposes of conducting the analysis, we also need to know how and when the property was accessed in the recent past." (Dick moved, Tom Harris seconded).

No objection heard

Consensus Decision: SMAC recommend to the DFO the letter be sent as written without the two sentences in the first paragraph at the top of the second page. Those sentences being "Please provide us with type of access (motorized and/or mechanized) needed as well as the approximate number of trips and during what season of the year the access is needed" and "For purposes of conducting the analysis, we also need to know how and when the property was accessed in the recent past."

Law Enforcement Update:

George Orr introduced himself to the group as having been hired in April as the District Law Enforcement Ranger but is still waiting for the background check to be completed. In the interim, he has been driving the District and making visitor contacts seeing what people are thinking and noting problem areas. He has noted

significant incidents on the Mountain typical of which are campground nonpayment of fees, abandoned camp fires, and minor thefts. Because he has not yet received his certification, George works in conjunction with other rangers to have citations issued. George talked with the Council about the various violations he has seen and the means of correcting some of them.

In his contacts with people and although a lot of outreach has been done, he has found them to be confused and in need of better signing. George suggested on the Loop Road place free maps in the portal sign area. Members talked of the various types of problems encountered on the Mountain and the means to get the public educated to the new guidelines and laws that are in place since the passage of the Steens CMPA. Different media to inform people were discussed from maps to signing, to placing something in the Oregon Hunting synopsis.

Jerry told the group he would like to see people, who know the hunter and ATV groups and other vehicle users of Steens Mountain, get the word out to them that the more difficult the BLM has keeping signs up on all the spur roads off the cherry stems, the more environmentalists are going to drive to close the cherry stems.

Tom Dyer informed the Council the GIS program in Burns is piloting 30 minute maps that went out to hunters this year and were available to be picked up. We are updating the Burns District Interim map as well to show the trades.

Motion made and seconded for BLM to obtain the list of successful controlled hunt applicants in June of 2003 and send them a letter specifying the Steens CMPA and the wilderness area now exist and new rules may apply to their use of that area and to encourage them to get a current map and identify the sources for obtaining that map. (Cindy moved, Harland seconded.)

Discussion: Tom stated this type of thing would be helpful to him and at least starts the process of people talking to each other. It was also noted that getting the maps updated is an important component in the education of people.

Consensus Decision: BLM obtain the list of successful controlled hunt applicants in June of 2003 and send them a letter specifying the Steens CMPA and the wilderness area now exist and new rules may apply to their use of that area and to encourage them to get a current map and identify the sources for obtaining that map

Recreation:

Special Recreation Use Permit – Evelyn Trieman reported this summer the recreation monitoring took place in different locations as well as considering different things. The accuracy of the visitor counters was reviewed as well as the compliance with signing in at each trail head. She explained the formulas used in the past and the changes made to increase their accuracy. She reported compliance with sign-in at the trail heads was less than 50 percent and none of the

horseback groups are registering. Staff is working on a number of ideas to correct these problems and welcomes any suggestions from the SMAC. Some of the things currently being done as well as in the planning are more on-the-ground contacts through back country rangers, encouragement of website utilization, and installation of new traffic counters at different locations. The possibility of mandatory self issue permits was discussed as was how to get the information to the horseback groups, how important it is to register, and the location of the registers themselves.

Evelyn reported she is reworking the formulas in RMIS to increase the accuracy of the information and to make it more usable.

The Council agreed to hear a suggestion from the audience. Cliff Volpe looked closely at the registers and noticed that no where do they say "Trail Register". He suggested a small sign about overnight and day visitors are required to sign in here.

Brochure Update: Tara Wilson, Steens Public Affairs Specialist, updated the Council on the status of the brochure. She is reviewing the comments she has, is researching others including those from the sign committee, will review Council minutes and plans on using much of the information from the original brochure. The tentative schedule is to have it available in March of next year. The brochure could be distributed through mailings, onsite stands, website and people who walk into the office.

Tara updated the Council on the status of a proposal to build a wayside in Frenchglen and what it would entail. This information was brought to the SMAC for their consideration and would then be taken to the Frenchglen Community for their input since they are most affected by the current conditions and future needs. Some of the issues include speed, human waste, and volume of traffic.

Motion made and seconded to recommend the BLM pursue, with other entities, the idea of restrooms, parking area, wayside concept at Frenchglen. (Jerry moved, E. Ron seconded).

Discussion: Stacy raised the concern of the stock driveway, the various owners, as well as restrictions on the property. Cindy suggested the State Yard where there is already a concrete slab might also be an option. Jon told the SMAC members it is very early at this point and BLM is simply seeking to know if the SMAC thinks it is something that should be pursued.

Consensus Decision: BLM pursue the idea of restrooms, parking area, wayside concept at Frenchglen.

Winter Recreation: Jon Collins shared the report of winter use on the District, and indicated it is down from previous years, and snowmobilers contribute to the lack of use due to no available play areas.

The Council had a lengthy discussion on how best to meet some of the upcoming deadlines such as the transportation plan, whether or not to use LAC and a Recreation Plan.

Jason suggested the Council develop several alternatives for winter recreation which would help the group work toward agreement. With the premise this group will not make a specific recommendation for example on snowmobiles use, the different alternatives would provide the range.

The Council discussed how to focus the meetings on certain topics in order to accomplish more work on it. Jon reminded the Council they will receive an internal working draft in March or April with the full blown draft out in August to be available to the general public, and after that the final management plan.

The Council asked the chair and vice-chair to confer on tomorrow's agenda in order to notify people who would be traveling over for presentations that it wouldn't be necessary.

October 22, 2002

Members present and absent:

Same as yesterday with one modification:

Absent: Richard Benner, No Financial Interest, Portland, Oregon

Self introductions were performed by all present with Stacy clarifying that in one of the letters received, Roaring Springs was blamed for illegal grazing, and he stated it was not the ranch.

Meeting Dates:

Mike informed the group he would be unavailable January through February 15. Dates were set as:

January 23-24, 2003

March 3-5, 2003

April 10-11, 2003

May 8-9, 2003

June 5-6, 2003

Skip July

August 11-12, 2003

September 15-16, 2003

November 17-18, 2003

Motion made and seconded to have all meetings in Burns except the September 15-16 which would be in Bend. (Stacy moved, Hoyt seconded)

Discussion: The Council discussed various aspects of having a meeting in the Willamette Valley or other locations, having one meeting outside of Burns but changing the location, including the distance necessary for people to come to attend, the fact that the Gorge Commission refused to meet outside of that area, the desire of others to be involved, the need to keep the meetings near the land being discussed, and the possibility of planning meetings be held around the state.

Jason objected to the motion and proposed that if the motion could be withdrawn, he would make a new motion that the next six meetings be in Burns then leave fall meetings open for different locations. It was pointed out the Federal Register process would have an impact on this.

Roll Call Vote: Tom – Yes; Harland – Yes; Stacy – Yes; Alice – Yes; Mike – Yes; Cindy – Yes; Jerry – No; Hoyt – Yes; Jason – No; Ron – Yes

Motion passed since it received the necessary simple majority for procedural.

Review and Approve August Minutes:

Motion made and seconded to approve August minutes (Jerry moved; Alice seconded)

Discussion: Members reviewed the changes proposed on the new copy and some others that occurred as they talked.

Motion withdrawn by Jerry with Cindy's agreement.

Motion made and seconded to approve the minutes as amended (Jerry moved, Cindy seconded)

Consensus Decision: Approve August meeting minutes as amended.

Recreation:

Limits of Acceptable Change Discussion Continued: Jerry reviewed the reasons for his development of the paper the Council has been given, which was to understand the options better, and to understand the LAC process, definitions within it and the goals, and frame work surrounding it. Jerry summarized his research, both oral and written, and his preference is not for zones, although they are useful if used as a tool rather than a goal. He would rather see things based on number of sites, density or lack of trails then look at existing impacts to see where we are.

The Council talked of the availability of baseline data and what areas on the Mountain have such data.

Jon expressed concern for BLM to know where we were at in October 2000, but doesn't believe there has been considerable change since then. We do have baseline for Little Blitzen and Big Indian because of the back country rangers. They have delineated trails and campsites that they have found. He is concerned about getting too far down the road before identifying what is baseline.

Jon talked of the zones, LAC and the BLM is not locked into LAC but does need guidance on how we'd like to manage these under each alternative so that analysis can be performed.

Dave Harmon explained the baseline BLM is legally obligated to maintain is the condition when the area was designated in 2000. He informed the Council of the necessity of the planning process to ensure the agency is within the parameters of the legislation. Inventory could occur on such things as wildlife habitat; water quality; soil compaction; vegetative types; invasive species; and aspen stands. Because all the inventory cannot be done prior to the plan, personnel used a combination of existing inventory, data collected and professional judgment. Once the plan is completed, more monitoring can be done to provide the data needed.

Council members discussed the various definitions and their applicability to an inventory. Some concerns were expressed as to what constituted a trail, who would make that decision, and how the decision would be applied as well as where they would fit within zones. Members also talked of the different types of trails, and their possible impacts on the land.

Stonehouse EA:

Darren Brumback, Fisheries Biologist, Burns District BLM and a member of the ID team, presented the proposed changes resulting from an August field tour. Darren is seeking recommendations from the SMAC relative to the new alternative.

Council members agreed to have Ed Davis join in the discussion.

Motion made and seconded to recommend BLM go forward with Alternative 4, the four pasture system be made the proposed action, and they amend it to have that fence include the entire perennial water flows into the Riddle Creek Pasture. The Riddle Creek Pasture would then include all of the riparian flows. Motion made by Stacy and Jerry seconded.

Discussion: Ed would like to get this settled so he could plan for the future since it has been ongoing for some time. Issues raised concerning the EA included ensuring contractors knew the new regulations governing the area, the impact to

fisheries, the definition of major and minor streams, and the number of reservoirs addressed.

Also, Alice expressed some philosophical concerns with the amount of proposed improvements and she would like to see a no graze alternative where other forage is provided for Ed Davis. Jerry stated that this not being a seamless landscape management approach bothered him, but since he had agreed earlier, he is still willing to go forward with it.

Stacy explained that although we are managing for a healthy ecosystem and healthy economics, these depend on late season forage of decent quality. The only means to get that forage is to go high on the mountain or irrigate. Those are the only two options available. He stated that in order to have livestock in this area and to manage it well, everything has to be in place except perhaps a half mile of fence. Why not put the fence in and manage it well. With 10,000 acres there are actually few improvements and none are permanent. Hoyt felt this would be a problem anywhere on the mountain because riparian, season and duration of use issues will require fence and water developments.

Fences instead of cattleguards were also discussed, but with the current traffic rate, the gates get left open frequently and cattle get into the areas they are not supposed to be as well as being a problem in tight rotation systems.

The Council agreed to return to this topic after the Public Comment period.

Public Comment:

Susan Hammond, Diamond Ranches, Inc., felt that with the sheer number of government people present facilitates the government rather than the cooperative management this group is supposed to promote. She noted that ODFW hasn't been in attendance at these meetings, and she does not know if the BLM has a memorandum of understanding with them or not but feels it is critical they be brought along in this process. She also felt that any recreation planning needs to take into consideration the dates of seasons for fishing, hunting elk or deer. She suggested using aerial photos to help solve some of the baseline data concerns.

Tara Gunter, representing ONDA, introduced herself because of the new members and gave some personal background. She thanked SMAC members for all their work and volunteer time and hopes it will be a successful process. She also thanked the Council for having a meeting in Bend and making it possible for other interested people to take time off from their jobs to attend. She hopes to see more meetings in Bend and the Willamette Valley. She wanted to bring attention again to ONDA's reinventory of Andrews and it is available on their website as well. She stated there had been a lot of talk about the private land on Steens Mountain, which she agrees is a legitimate concern, however, 80 percent of the land within the geothermal withdrawal is public land. One point not really considered as yet is Section 5 of the Wilderness Act which states that if the Federal government

cannot provide reasonable access, it can facilitate an exchange of land of equal value. It also states if Congress can fund a purchase then it could be accomplished if reasonable access cannot be provided.

Dave Tracy, representing the Juniper Group of the Sierra Club, expressed appreciation for having a meeting in Bend. He stated the Juniper group has long been interested in Steens Mountain protection since it is a destination point for many members. His group believes livestock production and grazing within Steens CMPA should be reevaluated and eliminated, wildlife habitat restored, snowmobiles prohibited, off-road use impacts minimized or eliminated; all streams and rivers should be considered for wild and scenic designation; and all lands not currently in wilderness should be reevaluated to possibly be included in wilderness. His group also believes there should be no competitive recreation events, development of commercial activities, and that the Steens Rim Run is inappropriate.

Charley Otley, landowner, said he would make the same speech here he did for Harney County Stock Growers. He was privileged to go on the Stonehouse tour and what he wants to comment about is that range has had three growing seasons without any cattle on that range. A cow free wilderness is detrimental to wildlife as is. This is because cattle eat the big rough stuff off allowing young shoots to grow which is the preferred food for wildlife. The grass was old in the area that had not had cattle on it, and that is why you didn't see any wildlife. He wanted it on the record that making an area cow free is not the thing to do for wildlife habitat. He has been on the range physically for 70 years and knows what goes on. He has a 2,000-acre field on the west side of McCoy and has not used it in over 3 years because of water issues. He took a 4-wheeler and drove through it real slow and looked for wildlife tracks, never finding any in the entire 2000 acres. He wants it on the record that is his firm belief.

Bill Marlett, Executive Director of ONDA in Bend, expressed his appreciation for all the effort the Council expends and that they have his sympathy or empathy for the pretty grueling process through which they are going. The process is for a good cause. They will get there eventually although there will be friction and conflict along the way which is just part of the playing field. He wished the Council the best of luck.

Dennis Oliphant, current president of Oregon Guides and Packers, and on the Board of Directors of Outdoors (a National group), stated his appreciation for the agency people and the citizen volunteers as well. This process is never easy and this one certainly stands to protect a precious area to all of us. He is here to speak to the recreation public and their access to this special place. He feels the public needs to be involved in the planning process because the citizen public needs the public land not only to fulfill their own spiritual and recreational needs but for future generations. He also urged the Council not to forget those in the public

who do not have a high level of skill and equipment; they too need access to the Steens just as has been available for years.

Stonehouse EA Continued:

Although it cannot be necessarily addressed in the current EA, the Council discussed means to address the situation again if things such as ranch ownership changed or a solution that would better accomplish seamless management.

Motion withdrawn by Stacy with Jerry's agreement. (Council agreed) Motion – on floor.

Motion made and seconded to recommend to BLM that Alternative 4, with the fence adjustment, is the SMAC's recommended alternative to be used in the decision record, and that if a more landscape-minded option comes up before fences are constructed, then that option be given full consideration. (Stacy moved, Tom seconded)

Discussion: Gary reminded the Council the options must have been analyzed in the EA in order to be implemented. Requesting funding can be done for out years yet.

Consensus Decision: Recommend BLM use Alternative 4, with the fence adjustment in the decision record, and that if a more landscape-minded option arises prior to fence construction, then that option be given full consideration.

Motion made and seconded for SMAC to recommend the chosen route for the fence be the one that goes through the WSA. (Stacy moved, Hoyt seconded)

Discussion: The question was raised as to whether or not gap fences work in this area, and it was determined that they would not. Members discussed that by the time the fence went far enough, you would have a significant portion of Stonehouse above the fence and would create a high impact zone. Council members discussed the viability of placing the fence in the WSA as it affects wildlife, viewshed and water availability. Jerry stated that since wilderness activists want all of the Stonehouse area as Wilderness, it doesn't matter that much whether it goes inside the WSA or not.

Consensus Decision: Recommend to BLM that the route for the fence be through the WSA.

Special Recreation Permits: Jon Collins reported the decision on the Running Camp EA will be out in 2-3 weeks. The process for putting out an EA, the comment period and appeal period were all reviewed.

After the Running Camp Record of Decision is completed, the second EA (3 SRP Outfitters with multiple activities) will be issued for a 30-day comment period.

Currently, Jon is meeting with permittees to ensure a consistent approach for all concerned. This EA will be provided to SMAC members by e-mail in order that they may discuss it at the next meeting.

Action Followup: Copy of the Outfitter EA to SMAC prior to next meeting.

Planning Update:

Gary Foulkes showed the Council the document entitled 'Analysis of the Management Situation and Subbasin Review' (AMS) which is available on the District's web site, by disk or by hard copy. Gary asked the Council to let him know of any issues or concerns they find while reading the AMS.

Gary asked Council members to look at the revised goals and objectives and make any suggestions on how they could be carried out in relation to the alternatives and management actions. Gary asked members to have that information back to him by November 7, 2002.

Action followup: Information to Gary Foulkes by November 7.

Council members determined their input would be most vital during the April meeting, therefore, schedule three days for the April meeting (April 9, 10 and 11) and the meeting in March will be two days (March 3 and 4).

Members were reminded the deadline for completion of the RMP is driven by the legislated dates, and BLM has to stay on track with or without the group's input.

Gary noted that Harney County had proposed an Alternative F, some aspects of which he had incorporated into Alternative D. The county then asked BLM Director Clarke to review this. The RMP alternatives are in Washington Office for a requested review and the outcome is not yet known.

Another aspect yet unknown, is what impact the ICBEMP documents will have on this RMP.

The Council discussed what contributions they could make for winter recreation and the RMP, and the timeframes necessary to meet the deadlines with a preliminary draft at the end of February, which means March and April are scheduled for internal review. The draft will then be printed in July and out to the public after that, with public meetings in August.

Recreation Continued:

Limits of Acceptable Change: Council held a lengthy discussion on the possible definitions associated with the Zones (see handout Title "Summary of Components for Each Zone"), trails, trailless areas, mandatory self issue permit system, types of use that could be made, topographic restrictions, types of horse

use, the need for baseline data and how difficult it is to acquire, and how to address these issues.

Jon reported the back country rangers did a lot of data collection including campsite assessment using a specific formula. He discussed the need to get more customers involved, to understand use patterns and to repeat the monitoring.

The Council members agreed to the following definitions in reference to non-motorized use:

Trail – remains year after year

Route – appears one year and is healed the next

Motion made and seconded to remove the sentence “These locations would be managed as trailless areas with the possibility of a prohibition placed on pack stock” from Zone 1.

Discussion: Members discussed the fact one type of use should not be singled out and the possible means for managing these areas and what impacts could be expected. Also discussed was the need for baseline data in order to determine what exists currently and what might exist. A two-zone concept was also discussed. (Stacy moved, Tom seconded)

Jerry objected to the motion.

Roll call vote: Tom – Yes; Harland – Yes; Stacy – Yes; Alice – Yes; Cindy – Yes; Jerry – No; Hoyt – Yes; Jason - Yes; Ron – Yes.

Motion failed for lack of necessary nine votes.

Jerry clarified his objection. The Council has not yet assumed whether or not they want to use it, how many zones there would be, and how the rest would work. He requested to look at the whole picture.

Motion made and seconded to have only two zones, with one being most restrictive. (Jason moved, Stacy seconded).

Discussion: Jason’s proposal would be that what is listed under Zone One and would then be combined with Zone 3 and the Council would work on the other zone which would be the most restrictive. The Council discussed various issues with only two zones.

Motion withdrawn by Jason with Stacy’s agreement.

Motion made and seconded to have three zones. (Stacy moved, Hoyt seconded)

Discussion: The Council discussed some of the merits of the three-zone concept.

Consensus Decision: Establish three zones. With the following modifications to the existing wording.

Zone 1: Remove “These locations would be managed as trailless area with the possibility of a prohibition placed on pack stock.”

Zone 2: Add at end of paragraph “Signs, new trails, and visitor facilities such as outhouses and bridges would not be present “

Change “These areas..... “ to “These areas would be managed such that pre-existing trails would retain a primitive condition. Campfires would sometimes be permitted. Delete ...” and signs, new trails and visitor facilities would not normally be present.” Delete “Pack stock would be allowed.”

Zone 3: Add “Signs, new trails and visitor facilities, such as outhouses and bridges would not be present” to the bottom of the paragraph.

Change “Travel routes in these areas . . .” to “Pre-existing trails in these areas would be managed to retain a primitive condition.”

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Recreation –
 Winter
 Existing condition – wilderness –
 (old) map with roads in wilderness area
Chair election – Move to January meeting
Backcountry byway
Transportation plan
Trails
Wild Horse viewing
Dispersed motorized recreation

Submitted by Liz Appelman

The SMAC approved the meeting minutes as amended on December 3, 2002.

Certified by:

Tom Harris, Chair

Date

